

Sen. Dodd and California

Connecticut Constituent Finds Green

Pastures Beside the Golden Gate

Pat 7/24/66
By Drew Pearson

THIS COLUMN has already reported how Sen. Tom Dodd (D-Conn.) wrote, telephoned and visited California's Gov. Pat Brown to intervene in a local zoning case on the opposite side of the continent from his native Connecticut.

The Senator also wrote, telephoned and visited Interior Secretary Stewart Udall in an attempt to dissuade him from creating a national park in the shadow of the Golden Gate Bridge, which would have stopped the construction of a high-rise apartment city on that spot.

"I am interested in the matter," Dodd explained in one letter to Secretary Udall, "because Tom Frouge (the developer) is a long-time personal friend, a resident of Connecticut, and a respected member of the business community in my state."

Dodd neglected to add that Frouge was also his law client. It is understandable that the Senator would omit this detail, since the law prohibits a member of Congress from accepting a legal fee or any other payment for representing an individual before the Federal Government.

Yet Dodd interceded for his client not only with the Interior Department but with the General Services Administration and the Army.

REAL ESTATE developer Frouge told us that he has retained Dodd for years and is proud to have a United States Senator as his attorney. In March, 1965, he asked Dodd to appeal to President Johnson about his 53 high-rise apartments.

"If a meeting could be arranged with President Johnson as early as possible," Frouge wrote the Senator, "it would eliminate any doubt as to our intent and would bear out that we are planning our development to coincide with his discussion on planned communities under the New Society."

Frouge was disturbed over the opposition of California conservationists who feared the towering apartment city would spoil the view of the Golden Gate.

"I was interested to get your letter," Dodd wrote Frouge on March 22, "regarding the information distributed by the Committee to Save the Golden Gate. I hope to have an opportunity to discuss the entire situation with Secretary Udall in the very near future."

Eight days later, an appointment was arranged. Dodd made a personal pitch to the Secretary, then followed it up the same day with a letter.

"I appreciated your courtesy in seeing me this morning," he wrote Udall on March 30, "and, as you suggested, I am bringing the facts, as I understand them, about the Frouge situation to your attention in this letter."

DODD WENT ON to explain that "a local group known as the Committee to Save the Golden Gate has been active in opposition. Their approach has been that the Marinello development will completely ruin the landscape around the Golden Gate Bridge and for this reason should not be approved."

He enclosed material which Frouge had sent him to discredit the conservationists.

"I believe," promised Dodd, "you will find the information enclosed of help to you in properly assessing the true situation involving Marinello."

He also reported to his law client Frouge: "I had an opportunity to meet with Secretary of the Interior Udall this morning, and to make my position a matter of record. Following our meeting, I sent him a letter, a copy of which I am enclosing for your information. . . I am sure that my meeting with the Secretary was helpful, and I will keep you posted on any new developments."

SECRETARY UDALL then backed away. He had intervened vigorously to preserve the view of the Potomac, but regarding the Golden Gate project he ruled: "No jurisdiction."

Frouge, however, was not satisfied. He wrote to the Senator on Aug. 24, 1965:

"Tom, I think this is a great

opportunity for you and me. If we could get the Government to lease some space from us—this would mean acceptance by the business world of Marinello as a satellite city to San Francisco.

"I am sure that if this was brought to LBJ's attention he would like the concept and do something to help us. An announcement such as this would be fantastic—it would mean immediate success."

There is no record that Dodd ever spoke to the President, but Dodd did intercede with the General Services Administration, which rents Government office space.

T. E. Hannon, GSA regional administrator, replied to Dodd from San Francisco on Aug. 27: "There is no present indication that there would be a need for any large blocks of space in Marin County. However, this situation could change and, as Mr. Frouge's development is several years from completion, he was requested to keep us informed, and we will discuss with him any Government requirements when his space is available."

The law against members of Congress charging legal fees for their intercession with the Federal Government is explicit. Judge Alexander Holtzoff has stated that Dodd's employes should have taken their case against Dodd to the Justice Department. It will be interesting to see what the Justice Department does about the above case.

CONGRESSMEN Teno Roncalio of Wyoming and Roman Pucinski of Illinois, both Democrats, used their July 4 vacations to fly to South Vietnam and visit their old army division, "The Big Red One."

When Brig. Gen. William DePuy took the two congressmen to the front lines where American troops were setting up an ambush for the Vietcong, Roncalio joked:

"If we're captured I want you guys to know that the fellow with me is Sen. Wayne Morse and that my real name is Fulbright."